

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HCR 4406

---

**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks

**Brief Description:** Establishing a joint select legislative task force to review watershed health and salmon recovery plans.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Williams, Buck, Moeller, Hinkle, B. Sullivan, Linville and Takko.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks: 2/22/05, 2/24/05 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Establishes a Joint Select Legislative Task Force (Task Force) to evaluate and make recommendations regarding implementation of watershed health and salmon recovery plans.
- Directs the Task Force to evaluate current organizational structures, plans, and funding sources and make recommendations for ongoing implementation and funding by December 31, 2005.

---

### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ECOLOGY & PARKS

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives B. Sullivan, Chair; Upthegrove, Vice Chair; Buck, Ranking Minority Member; Kretz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Blake, DeBolt, Dickerson, Eickmeyer, Hunt, Orcutt and Williams.

**Staff:** Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

**Background:**

Processes to conduct watershed planning and recover salmon involve federal, state, tribal, and local governments, in addition to lead entities, watershed planning groups, regional recovery groups, and in some watersheds, sub-basin planning for the Northwest Power and Conservation Council. Many of these salmon and watershed processes are at the point of developing watershed level or regional salmon recovery plans.

Watershed Planning

The Watershed Management Act of 1998 allows local governments to conduct watershed planning. If a local government conducts watershed planning, they must include a water

quantity element, and may include water quality and habitat elements and the recommending minimum instream flows. The watershed planning area, similar to lead entities, may be conducted on a single or multi-WRIA (watershed resource inventory area) basis. Currently there are 31 planning units representing 40 WRIsAs conducting watershed planning.

#### Salmon Recovery Planning

The Salmon Recovery Act of 1998 established several new provisions including the creation of the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office, the requirement for a biennial State of the Salmon Report, an Independent Science Panel, the creation of local salmon recovery groups or "lead entities," and an Interagency Review Team to disperse funds for habitat restoration projects. Currently, there are 27 lead entities organizations in Washington.

#### Salmon Recovery Funding

The Salmon Recovery Funding Act of 1999 primarily established the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) within the Interagency Office for Outdoor Recreation (IAC), but also included several other salmon recovery provisions. The SRFB makes grants for salmon habitat projects and salmon recovery activities pursuant to legislative appropriation. The IAC provides grant and loan administration assistance to the SRFB. The SRFB must develop procedures and criteria for allocating funds on a statewide basis to address the highest priorities for salmon habitat protection and restoration.

#### Regional Salmon Recovery Organizations

Five regional organizations have formed to address salmon recovery on an as Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) scale. Of those established, two regional recovery organizations have been created statutorily, the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board, and the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board. The other three regional entities include the Puget Sound Shared Strategy, the Yakima Sub-basin Fish and Wildlife Planning Board, and the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board. Regional recovery groups are in the process of completing regional recovery plans. When completed, the plans will contain strategies to address habitat, harvest, hatchery, and hydropower activities for recovering salmon populations within the region.

---

#### **Summary of Substitute Bill:**

A Joint Select Legislative Task Force (Task Force) is established to evaluate and make recommendations to the Legislature regarding the implementation of watershed health and salmon recovery plans. The Task Force must select a chair, and staff support will be provided by staff from the House of Representatives Office of Program Research and Senate Committee Services.

The Task Force must evaluate and make recommendations including:

1. a review of local watershed and salmon recovery plans and projects;
2. a review of the current funding for administration, planning, and project implementation;

3. a review of the organizational structure of the regional recovery organizations and watershed level entities;
4. the development of recommendations for changes to current organizational structures;
5. the development of recommendations for sources of funding for ongoing activities; and
6. the development of recommendations for improving the allocation of mitigation funding on a watershed basis.

The Task Force includes the Chair and Ranking Minority from the following committees in the House of Representatives:

- Economic Development, Agriculture, and Trade Committee;
- Natural Resources, Ecology, and Parks Committee; and
- Capital Budget Committee.

The Task Force includes the Chair and Ranking Minority from the following committees in the Senate:

- Water, Energy, and Environment Committee;
- Natural Resources, Ocean, and Recreation Committee; and,
- Ways and Means Committee.

The Task Force may establish an advisory committee composed of the following members or their designees:

- the Director of the Department of Ecology;
- the Director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife;
- the Chair of the Salmon Recovery Funding Board;
- a representative from the Office of the Governor;
- a representative from a watershed planning group;
- a representative from a lead entity;
- a representative from a regional salmon recovery group;
- a representative from the federal fisheries service;
- a representative from federally recognized Indian tribes;
- a representative from counties;
- a representative from cities;
- a representative from water purveyors;
- a representative from agriculture; and
- a representative from a fisheries enhancement group.

The Task Force must be established by June 1, 2005, and report its evaluations and recommendations to the appropriate legislative committees by December 31, 2005. The Task Force expires January 1, 2006.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The substitute bill adds regional fisheries enhancement groups, cities, counties, water purveyors, and agricultural interests to the advisory committee for the Task Force, specifies that legislative members and certain non-legislative members shall be reimbursed for travel, and adds that the Legislature recognizes the importance of water for people, farms, and fish.

---

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Testimony For:** (In support of the original concurrent resolution) Washington responded to the listing of salmon on the Endangered Species Act by passing legislation to establish lead entities and watershed planning groups. In addition, regional salmon recovery groups, planning efforts under the Bonneville Power Act, regional fisheries enhancement groups, and other local efforts have been working hard to protect and restore watershed and salmon. Policy guidance is needed to prioritize how to best spend scarce financial resources. Regional fisheries enhancement groups have been working on salmon recovery efforts and should be recognized and added to the advisory committee. Back in 1998 when watershed planning and the Salmon Recovery Act were enacted, there was a decision to keep the two issues separate to ensure salmon recovery projects could proceed while the more contentious water discussions took place. It is time to review the efforts under way to determine what is the best way to move forward.

(With concerns to the original concurrent resolution) Fishery enhancement groups should be included in the advisory committee.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support of the original concurrent resolution) Representative Williams, prime sponsor; Representative Buck; Paul Parker, Washington State Association of Counties; Dick Wallace, Department of Ecology; and Tim Smith, Department of Fish and Wildlife.

(With concerns to the original concurrent resolution) Ed Owens, Coalition of Coastal Fisheries.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.